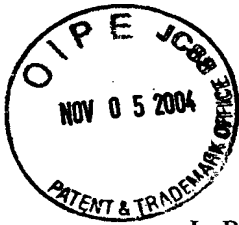


1762  
JFW**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

In Re Application of : Hardy et al. )

Serial No.: 09/937545 )

Filed: 01/22/2002 )

For: STOP-OFF FOR DIFFUSION )  
COATING )

Before the Examiner:

Timothy Howard Meeks

Group Art Unit: 1762

**Amendment**

Mail Stop Amendment  
Commissioner for Patents  
PO Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir,

Responsive to the Official Action mailed October 29, 2004 please amend the claims as provided in the attached complete listing of the claims and as further described below. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the claim amendment and following remarks.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 3, 4 and 19 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. Applicant has amended: Claim 3 to replace "ceramic" with "composite material" (basis in specification, page 2, lines 23-25); Claims 4 and 5 to specify "the metal in the mask"; and to delete Claim 19. As amended the claims satisfy 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Newly present Claims 27 and 28 have basis in the specification, page 3, lines 11-15.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 and 16-18 under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by Pfaendtner et al. (US Patent 6332926) and Claims 2-10 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pfaendtner et al. Claims 11-15 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants submit that the claims are neither anticipated nor obvious in view of Pfaendtner et al.

Pfaendtner et al. discloses a coating prevention structure which in one embodiment, (as described in column 7, lines 50-60) comprises a mass of powder particles within a container, wherein the particles may be, for example, a nickel-aluminum alloy which chemically reacts with the aluminum-source gas to prevent it from contacting the external surface, and with the metal particles mixed with inert particles such as aluminum oxide particles, nickel powder, or chromium powder compounds.

Applicants invention as claimed is substantially different. Applicants claim a mask comprising a composite material containing silica, an inert refractory diluent and a metal or metal or metal alloy which is capable of reacting with silicon thereby preventing siliconisation of the substrate with silicon from the composite material and which is capable of reacting with the metal being applied by diffusion coating to protect the substrate surface.

The Pfaendtner et al reference does not disclose the use of silica in a mask, much less Applicants' claimed use of silica in combination with an inert refractory diluents and a metal or metal alloy in a mask. As such Pfaendtner et al. cannot anticipate nor render obvious Applicants' claimed invention.

Further, Pfaendtner et al. is not available as a reference against Applicants' invention as it issued on December 25, 2001 based on a filing date of August 11, 1999. Applicants' application has an international filing date of March 28, 2000 with a priority date of March 29, 1999. The priority documents have been submitted to the International Bureau and are of record in this US application.

In view of the enclosed amendment and above remarks applicants request withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 USC 102, 103 and 112. Applicants submit that the claims are in condition for allowance.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

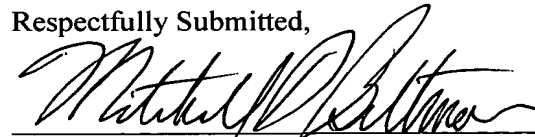
Date of Deposit Nov 2, 2004

Mitchell D. Bittman

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Date of Signature 11/2/2004

Respectfully Submitted,



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